

line with parents' wishes.<sup>20</sup> Their system would provide ratings that involve separate labels for sex, violence, and language, and give a measure of intensity with additional words such as "occasional," "frequent," or "widespread." This is a very welcome turn of events, given that distinguished members of the creative community feel that an approach that parents want is both appropriate and feasible.

In evaluating whether a rating system will ultimately satisfy parents' needs, we can look to food labeling as an analogy. Because parents are concerned for the physical well-being of their children, they appreciate the information provided by food labels, which is based on nutritional science. In other words, parents want to know how much fat and sodium there is in a can of soup, for example, as well as the availability of protein and carbohydrates. They also need to know the effects of these various components of a food item on a growing child so that they can make decisions that are in their child's best interest. But in the end, they value their freedom to create their own family's menus.

Likewise, parents are seeking information on television content areas so they can reduce their children's access to programming that they consider inappropriate. But, just as food labeling is not helpful without any knowledge of the effects of various nutrients on the body, a television rating system must also reflect what research has shown about the effects of different aspects of media content on different groups of children. Refinements in a rating system as dictated by research findings will undoubtedly prove valuable, and ultimately, very useful to parents. And any rating system will need to be reinforced by public education about the risks posed by different types of content.

But in the final analysis, the system that is adopted must respond to the needs and desires of the group that will use it. Parents have strong feelings about what would be useful to them. It is pointless to develop a system that parents will not use.

#### Acknowledgements

Many people worked especially hard to bring this project to fruition. Special thanks are due to Rhoda Baruch and Michael Benjamin of IMHI for their thoughtful contributions and support of this project. Many thanks are also due to Amy Nathanson and Linda Henzl at the University of Wisconsin for the high levels of intelligence and creativity they put into producing the survey and preparing the report. Leaders of the National PTA are to be commended for their insight, commitment, and dedication to the issue of improving children's television programming and for working to address the needs of parents. We are also indebted to the grassroots members of the PTA for the opinions, suggestions, and feedback they provided in this survey.

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<sup>20</sup>"Dealing in V-chips." *The Los Angeles Times*, November 8, 1996.

**NEW DATA: FOR RELEASE April 8, 1997, 9:30 a.m. EDT**

**Reasons Why Movies Received a PG Rating: 1995-1996**

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**Summary.** Two-thirds of the movies rated by the MPAA over the past two years were rated "R," while 16% were rated "PG-13," 14% were rated "PG," and only 3% were rated "G." Of the movies that were rated "PG," more than one-fourth got that rating for language only and another 13% had "thematic elements" only.

Recently, we reported that for movies shown on television, the Motion Picture (MPAA) rating of PG was uninformative about the content to be expected.<sup>1</sup> An analysis of movies in a random sample of television programming that were aired with both MPAA ratings and premium channel content codes showed that the PG rating signals a wide disparity of content combinations. For example, 15% of PG-rated movies had only adult language, 18% had only violence, 22% had sex and language, and 22% had violence and language. The question obviously arises whether this finding is peculiar to movies shown on premium cable channels or whether the PG rating is equally uninformative for movies in general.

To determine the proportion of PG-rated movies that contained various types of content, we analyzed *all* the movies rated by the Classification and Rating Administration of the Motion Picture Association of America during the years 1995 and 1996 using

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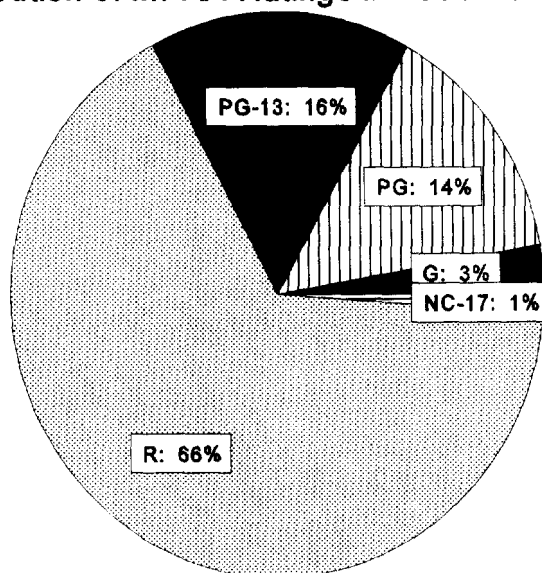
<sup>1</sup>Cantor, J., Harrison, K., & Nathanson, A. (1997). Ratings and advisories for television programming. In Center for Communication & Social Policy (Ed.), *National Television Violence Study*, Volume 2 (pp. 267-322). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

information provided in the Motion Picture Rating Directory.<sup>2</sup> Starting in January of 1995, the listings have indicated the reasons why movies received their ratings, for all ratings beyond "G."

Our analysis showed that over this two-year period, 1,410 feature-length movies received ratings from the MPAA. Figure 1 displays the proportion of movies that received each of the five possible MPAA ratings. As can be seen from the Figure, two-thirds of the movies were rated "R," while only 3% were rated "G."

Figure 1

Distribution of MPAA Ratings in 1995-96 Movies



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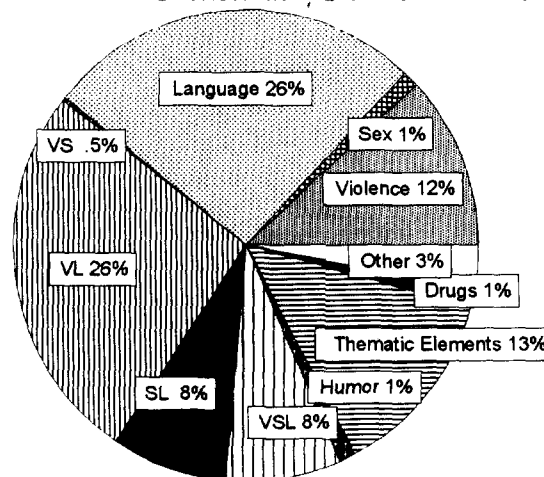
<sup>2</sup>Motion Picture Rating Directory. Encino, CA: Classification and Rating Administration, 1997.

The reasons stated for each movie's rating were categorized by one coder, and a second coder independently categorized the reasons for 20% of the movies, selected randomly. The categories were as follows (with reliabilities calculated as Cohen's kappa): violence, including action (kappa=.98), sexual behavior or situations (.99), language (1.00), or none of the above. The "none" category was subdivided into "thematic elements" (1.00), drugs (1.00), crude or sexual humor (.94), and "other."

Figure 2 shows how the various content combinations were distributed throughout the movies that were rated PG over the two-year period. As the figure shows, more than one-fourth of these movies were classified PG as a function of language only, and another 13% had only "thematic elements."

Figure 2

Distribution of Content in PG-Rated Movies



These findings reveal that the PG rating is as uninformative for movies overall as it is for movies shown on premium cable channels. The speculation that many movies are rated PG because of the presence of a few bad words is consistent with the finding that a quarter of PG-rated movies are rated that way because of language content only. Fully half of PG-rated movies have neither violence nor sex. A parent is forced to seek information on the MPAA's website or in other locations in order to have any indication of what is in store in a PG-rated movie.


These findings give further weight to the criticisms of the new television ratings, which are based on the MPAA ratings. They confirm that such age-based ratings do not provide parents with the information they need to protect their children from content they consider harmful.

# **NATIONAL TELEVISION**

# **STUDY**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

# **NATIONAL TELEVISION VIOLENCE STUDY**



**VOLUME 2**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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The Second Annual Report of the National Television Violence  
Study is dedicated to the memory of

**WINSTON "TONY" COX**

Tony Cox played a unique role in creating and nurturing the National Television Violence Study. His sharp intellect and enormous charm helped to narrow the gulf that sometimes separates media researchers from the creative community. He will be remembered as the preeminent advocate within the television industry for more responsible treatment of violence on television.

NATIONAL TELEVISION VIOLENCE STUDY / EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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# **INTRODUCTION**

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# INTRODUCTION

## Project Overview

Violence on television has been the subject of national debate for decades. In the last few years, public concern over this issue has intensified in response to overwhelming scientific evidence that TV violence has harmful effects on society. Due to this public concern, policy makers have called on the entertainment industry to more closely examine the way in which violence is shown on television. The National Television Violence Study (NTVS) came into being in this historic context.

Initiated in 1994, the National Television Violence Study is a three-year effort to assess violence on television. The project is funded by the National Cable Television Association (NCTA). The National Television Violence Study involves the efforts of media researchers at four universities, an oversight Council of representatives from national policy organizations, and project administration and coordination. The project is the largest scientific study of television violence ever undertaken. This report represents the findings from the second year of this three-year project.

Researchers at the University of California, Santa Barbara, assess violence in entertainment programming, such as comedy series, movies, children's shows, and music videos. Researchers at the University of Texas, Austin, examine violence in a particular type of programming—reality-based shows, such as tabloid news, talk shows, police shows, and documentaries. Researchers at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, study violence ratings and advisories used on television, including their impact on the viewing decisions of parents and children. Researchers at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, examine the effectiveness of anti-violence public service announcements produced by the television industry.

The project also involves the efforts of an oversight Council, whose role is to assure the integrity and independence of the study, provide advice and counsel to the researchers, ensure the scientific validity of the study, and identify implications from the findings. The Council is comprised of representatives from 17 national organizations that are concerned with the impact of television on society. These organizations represent the fields of education, medicine, law, violence prevention, psychology, and communication. In addition, one third of the Council members represent the entertainment industry.

The administration and coordination of the study is conducted by the Center for Communication and Social Policy at the University of California, Santa Barbara. This responsibility includes managing the videotaping of more than 3,000 programs each year for the content analysis, convening the NTVS Council, coordinating the research efforts among the four university sites, and releasing the study's report and findings. Before moving to UCSB in June 1996, the initial phases of this project, including the taping of the Year 2 sample, were coordinated and administered by Mediascope, a nonprofit organization.

## National Television Violence Study Council

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\*The Council Statement reflects the views of Council members only.  
Organizations listed for identification purposes only.

\*\*Alternates attended the 1996 Council Meeting in place of the Council member  
for their designated organization.



## Council Statement

**T**elevision has been a part of the lives of American families for nearly half a century. As the medium has become more pervasive, it has captured the attention of critics, who have argued that television has had various harmful effects on viewers, as well as defenders, who have suggested that television can give viewers a window into worlds of experiences and information both enlightening and uplifting. As the work of researchers has clearly shown, television does indeed hold the potential both to enlighten and to harm.

Dating back to the early years of television, the nation has engaged in a debate regarding the portrayal of violence on television. Until a decade ago the discussion focused on whether there was a problem, asking whether televised portrayals of violence really affect the values, attitudes, and behaviors of viewers. This general question has been answered in the affirmative, albeit with certain caveats. More recent research has helped clarify the conditions under which deleterious consequences are more or less likely to occur.

Over the past few years the focus of concern has shifted. Instead of debating the question of cause and effect, participants in this discussion have turned to an array of important questions. How much violence is being portrayed on television? Has the attention devoted to this issue led to a decrease in televised violence? How much of this violence is being shown in ways that either exacerbate or moderate the potential negative consequences to viewers? Are efforts to inform viewers via ratings and advisories widespread or, indeed, even helpful?

The information needed to answer questions such as these requires sophisticated social science research on a scale rarely undertaken. In 1994, the National Television Violence Study (NTVS) was initiated, with support from the National Cable Television Association, to tackle these complex and thorny issues and thereby provide the knowledge to inform the deliberations of the television industry, the public, and policy makers. The first report of the National Television Violence Study, released in 1996, provided us with the most rigorous analysis of violent content on television ever conducted. This, the second report, builds upon and extends the work of the earlier report and should compel us to consider its findings seriously.

## Role of the Council

**R**epresentatives from 17 national organizations served on the National Television Violence Study Council over the past year. The strength of the Council resides in the diversity of its membership. The Council includes psychologists, sociologists, psychiatrists, lawyers, pediatricians, educators, parents, writers, directors, producers, and other representatives of the television industry, each bringing considerable and differing expertise to the Council's tasks.

The Council was established to provide advice to the university-based research teams across the duration of this multi-year study. The Council meets periodically with the researchers to provide input on specific research questions as well as feedback on findings and interpretations. Council discussions have ranged from broad considerations of theoretical and conceptual issues to detailed analyses of methodological questions. It has been the goal of the Council to assist the researchers rather than micromanage their work, and we have appreciated the courteous and careful consideration the researchers have given our input.

Given the highly politicized nature of the topic of media violence, the principal task of the Council has been to assure the autonomy and integrity of the study. Many parties have a vested interest in the results of this study, and the Council, along with the researchers and the funders, have sought to keep the study free from any

such influences. We confidently affirm that the research conducted and the conclusions drawn have not been affected by extraneous considerations. The researchers have pursued the questions as they posed them and stated their conclusions without constraint. They are free to present their findings in any public forum and to publish them independently.

## About The Study

**T**his study represents a significant advance in the research on media violence. Researchers from four universities—the University of California, Santa Barbara, the University of Texas, Austin, the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill—undertook three studies. The first is a landmark analysis of violent content in television programming. The second study examines children's reactions to ratings and viewer advisories as well as the use of ratings and advisories on television. The final study analyzes the content of anti-violence public service announcements (PSAs).

The core feature of the study of portrayals of violence on television is the use of contextual factors in determining the meaning and impact of any given portrayal. Drawing on prior research indicating that certain contextual features will have negative effects on the viewer (rewarding violence, failing to show consequences, etc.) and others will have positive effects (nonviolent punishment of the perpetrator), the researchers have carefully differentiated harmful and non-harmful portrayals, and have given a clearer picture of the prevalence of problematic televised violence than we have ever had.

Great care and attention have gone into every facet of this study. Violence was defined so that it could be measured precisely and reliably. The program content analyzed was selected randomly so that the results could be said to be characteristic of television programming in general. Programs were analyzed using a complex coding system, and the work of the coders was constantly reviewed to ensure reliability. What the researchers have accomplished is the largest and most scientifically sophisticated analysis of violent television content ever undertaken. This study will undoubtedly serve as the standard against which future content studies of television violence will be compared. Similarly, the studies of television ratings and advisories represents the largest effort to date to analyze these issues and will influence both future research and current policy discussions.

## Council Recommendations and Conclusions

**T**he results presented in the first report described a television landscape in which portrayals of violence were common and all too frequently depicted in a manner likely to support the development of negative attitudes, values, and behaviors among viewers. Little has changed from Year 1 to Year 2. The stability in both the amounts and types of violent portrayals across the two years is impressive but not altogether unexpected. Since data for the second year of the study were already being collected when the first report was released, there was little opportunity for the television industry to initiate changes that might have been reflected in this study. Thus, the stability in the findings speaks well of the reliability of the methods used in this study, and gives us confidence that any changes seen in the future are likely to reflect "true" change rather than error in the measurement of violence.

The results of this report should be carefully considered by members of television's creative and programming communities. In particular, the Council wishes to draw attention to the findings related to cartoon programming intended for young children. The study finds that children's cartoon programming contains

high rates of violence and that these portrayals frequently include multiple contextual factors that worsen the likely effect. Programming appealing to children under age 7 is singled out because these very young children are as likely to be affected by animated programming as they are by live-action programming, given their limited abilities to genuinely distinguish fantasy from reality. For young children in particular, cartoon violence must be taken seriously.

Parents should also take note of the high frequency of cartoon violence which goes unpunished, is undertaken by an attractive character, seems justified, and has minimal consequences for the victim. Research has consistently shown that cartoons with these characteristics can produce learning of aggressive behaviors in younger viewers.

The findings of the studies of ratings and advisories should be of interest to parents, members of the television industry, and policy makers. Just before the first NTVS report was released, Congress passed legislation mandating the installation of "V-chip" technology in new television sets and directing the television industry to develop a rating system for use with this technology. That rating system was released and put into operation earlier this year. Although the Year 1 and Year 2 NTVS studies did not test the new rating system, they raise serious questions about age-based rating systems similar to the one that has been adopted. At a minimum, they suggest that the impact of these new ratings be examined carefully. Given the findings reported by the University of Wisconsin researchers, the possibility of unintended negative effects from an age-based rating system should be taken seriously.

Anti-violence messages remain a rarity on television. While the study uncovered examples of programming with anti-violence themes, programs containing violence are rarely used to foster anti-violence attitudes and values. The analysis of anti-violence public service announcements found that few contained specific suggestions on how to avoid violent confrontations. Concrete anti-violence strategies were rarely offered. The results from the Year 1 and Year 2 studies suggest that those developing public service messages need to move beyond simple statements asserting that "violence is harmful" to showing that those who commit violence will suffer negative consequences, and that conflicts can be resolved peacefully.

The Council believes these studies and the findings reported by them bear directly on an array of issues of importance to the public, the television industry, the research community, and policy makers. We encourage the reader to scrutinize carefully the study and the recommendations offered by its authors.

The researchers are to be commended for the careful and comprehensive analysis of television violence provided in this report and its predecessor. The research reported here directly addresses the concerns of parents, the television industry, and policy makers, and merits their attention and response. The Council will continue to carry out its role through the duration of this study.

The National Television Violence Study has already broken new scientific ground. It is the hope of all involved with this study, including this Council, that the results have an impact far beyond the scientific community. We believe the findings have the potential to reshape the way we all think about and watch television. The ultimate impact of this work will be judged by whether it transforms how all of us—parents, researchers, television industry representatives, and policy makers—react to violent images on the small screen.

## Foundations of Research

This project is *not* a study of the effects of television violence on viewers. Literally hundreds of studies have already been conducted on this topic. However, this research project is strongly based on previous studies of how TV violence affects viewers. Before beginning this project, we conducted an extensive review of all the scientific studies that have looked at the effects of television violence. After reviewing this evidence, we derived four foundations as the basis for the National Television Violence Study.

### FOUNDATION 1: TELEVISION VIOLENCE CONTRIBUTES TO HARMFUL EFFECTS ON VIEWERS.

Our conclusion that violence on television contributes to negative effects on viewers is hardly novel. That same conclusion has already been reached by virtually every major group or agency that has investigated the topic. The American Psychological Association, the American Medical Association, the National Academy of Sciences, the National Institute of Mental Health, and the U.S. Surgeon General, among others, have all agreed that viewing TV violence can have a number of adverse effects on children and even on adults.

### FOUNDATION 2: THREE TYPES OF HARMFUL EFFECTS CAN OCCUR FROM VIEWING TELEVISED VIOLENCE:

- LEARNING AGGRESSIVE ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS
- DESENSITIZATION TO VIOLENCE
- INCREASED FEAR OF BEING VICTIMIZED BY VIOLENCE.

Research clearly shows that television violence contributes to aggressive behavior in children, and that this effect can last into adulthood. One study, for example, found that exposure to television violence at age 8 helped to predict criminal behavior in a sample of adults. Recent opinion polls suggest that most adults now recognize that televised violence can teach aggressive attitudes and behaviors to young viewers. There are, however, other types of effects that have received less attention. Research demonstrates that repeated exposure to TV violence can cause viewers to become more callous, or desensitized, to the harmfulness of violent behavior. In addition, long-term exposure to violent portrayals can increase people's fears about real-world violence. In particular, people who watch a lot of televised violence show exaggerated fear of being attacked by a violent assailant. Although these three types of effects are very different in nature, they all deserve attention from parents, policy-makers, and the television industry.

### FOUNDATION 3: NOT ALL VIOLENCE POSES THE SAME DEGREE OF RISK OF THESE HARMFUL EFFECTS.

The same research that shows that televised violence can have harmful effects also demonstrates that not all violent portrayals are problematic. There are many ways to depict violence on television. For example, the violence may occur on-screen and be shown graphically, or it may occur off-screen but be clearly implied. Violent acts may be shown close-up or at a distance. There are also differences in the types of characters who commit violence and their reasons for doing so. And there are differences in the outcomes of violence—some depictions focus on the pain and suffering of victims, whereas others avoid showing the negative consequences of physical aggression. Simply put, not all portrayals of violence are the same. Their context can vary in many important ways. Studies show that the way in which violence is presented helps to determine whether a portrayal might be harmful to viewers. Some features of violence increase the risk of a harmful effect, whereas others decrease that risk. In order to evaluate violence on television, then, we must look at the *contextual features* of different portrayals.

Based on an extensive review of all the studies in this area, we identified a range of contextual features that influence how audiences will respond to television violence. Below we describe each of these features and indicate whether it increases or decreases the risk of harmful effects. For a summary of these risks, see Table 1.

### **ATTRACTIVE PERPETRATOR**

Different types of characters use violence on television. Studies show that viewers of all ages are more likely to emulate and learn from characters who are perceived as attractive. Thus, heroes and “good guys” who act violently pose more risk to the audience than do villains.

### **ATTRACTIVE VICTIM**

Just as the perpetrator is an important contextual feature of violence, so is the victim. The nature of the victim is most likely to influence audience fear rather than learning. Studies show that viewers empathize with good characters more so than with bad ones, so violence against victims who are perceived as attractive can heighten audience fear.

### **JUSTIFIED VIOLENCE**

Viewers interpret an act of violence differently depending on a character’s motives for engaging in such behavior. Certain motives like self-defense or protecting a loved one can make physical aggression seem justified. Studies show that justified violence increases the chance that viewers will learn aggression; such portrayals legitimize such behavior. In contrast, violence that is undeserved or purely malicious decreases the risk of imitation or learning of aggression.

### **CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS**

Characters can use their own physical strength to enact violence against a victim or they can use some type of weapon. Conventional weapons like guns and knives can increase viewer aggression because such devices often trigger the memory of past violent events and behaviors. This type of priming effect is less likely to occur with novel or unconventional weapons such as a chair or a frying pan.

### **EXTENSIVE/GRAPHIC VIOLENCE**

Television programs and especially movies vary widely in the extent and graphicness of the violence they contain. A violent incident between a perpetrator and a victim can last only a few seconds and be shot from a distance or it can persist for several minutes and involve many close-up views of the action. Research indicates that extensive or repeated violence can increase desensitization, learning, and fear in viewers.

### **REALISTIC VIOLENCE**

Portrayals of violence that seem realistic are more likely to encourage aggression in viewers than are unrealistic scenes. Realistic depictions of brutality also can increase viewers’ fear. However, this does not mean that cartoon or fantasy violence on television is harmless. Research shows that children under the age of 7 have difficulty distinguishing reality from fantasy on television. In other words, what seems unrealistic to a mature viewer may appear to be quite real to a younger child. This helps to explain why younger children will readily imitate violent cartoon characters.

TABLE 1

## How Contextual Features Affect the Risks Associated with TV Violence

CONTEXTUAL FEATURES	HARMFUL EFFECTS OF TV VIOLENCE		
	LEARNING AGGRESSION	FEAR	DESENSITIZATION
Attractive Perpetrator	△		
Attractive Victim		△	
Justified Violence	△		
Unjustified Violence	▼	△	
Conventional Weapons	△		
Extensive/Graphic Violence	△	△	△
Realistic Violence	△	△	
Rewards	△	△	
Punishments	▼	▼	
Pain/Harm Cues	▼		
Humor	△		△

Note. Predicted effects are based on a comprehensive review of social science research on the different contextual features of violence. Blank spaces indicate that there is no relationship or inadequate research to make a prediction.

△ = likely to increase the outcome

▼ = likely to decrease the outcome

## REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS

Violence that is glamorized or rewarded poses a risk for viewers, but so does violence that simply goes unpunished. Studies show that rewarded violence or violence that is not overtly punished encourages the learning of aggressive attitudes and behaviors. In contrast, portrayals of punished violence can decrease the chances that viewers will learn aggression. Rewards and punishments can influence audience fear as well. Viewers who watch violence go unpunished are more anxious and more pessimistic about the consequences of real-life violence.

## PAIN/HARM CUES

Another important contextual feature involves the harmful consequences of violence. Studies indicate that showing the serious harm and pain that occurs from violence can discourage viewers from imitating or learning aggression.

## HUMOR

Viewers interpret violence that is cast in a humorous light as less devastating and less harmful. Humor also may seem like a reward for violence. For these reasons, the presence of humor in a violent scene can increase the chances that viewers will imitate or learn aggression from such a portrayal. Humor can also desensitize viewers to the seriousness of violence.

Looking across all the contextual features of violence, a portrayal that poses the greatest risk for the learning of aggression contains:

- an *attractive perpetrator*
- *morally justified reasons* for engaging in aggression
- *repeated* violence that seems *realistic* and involves a *conventional weapon*
- violence that is *rewarded* or goes *unpunished*
- *no visible harm or pain* to the victim
- a *humorous* context

As a comparison, a portrayal that poses the greatest risk for desensitization contains:

- *repeated* or extensive violent behavior
- a *humorous* context

Finally, a portrayal that poses the greatest risk for audience fear involves:

- violence that is aimed at an *attractive victim*
- violence that seems undeserved or *unjustified*
- violence that is *repeated* and that seems *realistic*
- violence that goes *unpunished*

#### FOUNDATION 4: NOT ALL VIEWERS ARE AFFECTED BY VIOLENCE IN THE SAME WAY.

In their viewing of television violence, both children and adults are influenced by the contextual features described above. For example, rewarded violence *increases* the likelihood of learning aggression regardless of the age of the viewer, whereas punished violence *decreases* that risk. Nevertheless, some unique concerns arise when we think about young children, particularly those under the age of 7.

Because young children's cognitive abilities are still developing, they often interpret television messages differently from mature viewers. For instance, younger viewers are more likely to perceive fantasy and cartoon violence as realistic, making this type of content more problematic for young ages. In addition, younger children are less capable of linking scenes together to make sense of events that occur at different points in a program. Therefore, if punishment for violence is delayed until the end of the program, this deterrent may go unnoticed by a young child. Punishment or any other contextual feature must occur in the same scene in order for a younger viewer to connect it to the original violent behavior.

These differences in cognitive ability mean that not all viewers will be affected in the same way by a violent portrayal. Children below the age of 7 may be especially vulnerable because they cannot easily discount fantasy violence as unreal and have trouble connecting events in the plot unless they are in the same scene. It is important to consider the age of the viewer when thinking about the harmful effects of television violence.

### Summary of Foundations

To summarize, several important ideas provide the foundations for this research project. Based on an extensive body of evidence, we know that television can have harmful effects on viewers, and that at least three types of effects can occur: a viewer can learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors from watching violence on television, become desensitized to the seriousness of violence, and feel frightened of becoming a victim of real-life violence. These effects are more likely to occur with certain types of violent portrayals. In other words, not all violence on television poses each of these risks or even any of them. Indeed, some depictions may be educational for some audiences. Contextual features like an attractive perpetrator, justification for violence, and violence that goes unpunished can increase the risk of harmful effects. But other features such as showing the harmful consequences of violence can actually reduce the likelihood of harmful effects occurring. Finally, the risks associated with television violence depend not only on the nature of the portrayal but also on the nature of the audience. Younger children are more vulnerable to certain types of depictions because of their limited abilities to make sense of television.



## **METHODS**

### **Television Violence and Its Context: A Content Analysis**

DEFINITION OF VIOLENCE

SAMPLE

### **Violence in Television Programming Overall**

MEASURING VIOLENCE: INCIDENTS, SCENES, AND PROGRAMS

CODING AND RELIABILITY

### **Violence in Television "Reality" Programming**

DEFINITION OF VIOLENCE

SAMPLE

RELIABILITY

### **Ratings and Advisories**

### **Designing Anti-Violence Messages for Television**

CONTENT ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

ANALYSIS OF ADOLESCENT AUDIENCES